

[By Jenna Pizzi](#)

Rep. Peter Welch recounted a week-long trip to the Middle East on Friday morning.

Calling from London, Welch told members of the press about his trip to Afghanistan, Oman and Egypt, where he was updated on U.S. military action and other regional affairs. This was Welch's fourth trip to the region.

The largest portion of the trip took Welch and five other members of Congress to Afghanistan for three days and two nights.

From speaking with people in Afghanistan, Welch said, he noticed the mood had changed from his previous visits.

"The emphasis has entirely shifted," said Welch. "The focus was on transition rather than expanding the battle."

Over a year ago, said Welch, the focus of the military was open-ended.

Welch said the military has accelerated the training of Afghan forces to expedite the drawdown of troops.

Welch met four Vermonters who were serving in the military in Kabul, Kandahar and Helmand province.

Welch had little to say about his time visiting Oman, an oil-rich country on the southern tip of the

Arabian Peninsula, where the trip began.

Welch and the rest of the legislators also spent one day in Cairo, where they discussed the uncertain future of Egypt with embassy, military and intelligence officials.

"As the Egyptian people move toward elections ... there will be some tension," said Welch.

While in London, as he prepares to return home, Welch had talked with British defense personnel and officials at the U.S. embassy there regarding Afghanistan.

He also observed a ceremony in London honoring their fallen troops. The custom there was to have a two-minute moment of silence in recognition of those soldiers who were lost.